

Ambassador Richard Olson
Remarks to the Pakistan Dairy Conference
November 27, 2012
Pearl Continental
As Prepared

AssalamuAlaikum.

Your Excellency Prime Minister of Pakistan, Raja Pervez Ashraf;

Honorable Minister of State for Food Security & Research, Muhammad Moazzam Ali Khan Jatoi;

Governor Punjab, Sardar Latif Khosa;

Ladies and Gentlemen: Good Afternoon.

I am pleased to join you today at the conclusion of the 2012 Pakistan Dairy Conference.

The United States is committed to working with Pakistan toward a brighter economic future. Recognizing that 45 percent of Pakistan's population is employed in agriculture, this sector is one of our top development priorities.

The United States and Pakistan have a long history in agricultural cooperation, including joint research on wheat and citrus fruit that dates back to Pakistan's founding. Today, we are continuing this cooperation by training 14,000 Pakistani farmers to better protect their livestock from disease, improve the quality of their products, and grow their profits. We're also helping to build new irrigation canals that will expand arable land by more than 200,000 acres to help increase agricultural yields.

We recognize that the private sector is crucial to fuelling economic growth, including in agriculture. That is why my government is committed to helping to facilitate this process by engaging in public private partnerships. Today, I want to highlight two projects that illustrate how governments can work together effectively with the private sector.

The first is the Entrepreneurs Project, which focuses on helping raise the income of Pakistani micro-entrepreneurs. We are proud of our partnerships with the Engro Foundation and Hashoo, two premier Pakistani companies that have helped us to connect dairy workers to large suppliers, increasing employment and improving livelihoods.

The second is the Dairy Project, where, in partnership with Nestle Pakistan and the Dairy and Rural Development Foundation (DRDF), we have trained 9,000 dairy farmers, 5,000 small agribusinesses, and 2,000 technicians to provide artificial insemination. These efforts help dairy farmers protect their livestock, improve the quality of their products, and increase their revenues.

These projects have been enormously successful. Since May 2010, the Entrepreneurs Project has doubled the incomes of more than 22,000 dairy farmers who were affected by the devastating floods. Our success illustrates the importance of creating public-private partnerships, and building the capacity of local organizations like DRDF, to promote sustainable development.

Central to all these efforts has been our commitment to increasing the involvement of women in the development of the dairy industry. Women are responsible for 80% of the animal care in the dairy sector, so investing in women is one of surest ways to achieve economic progress and greater prosperity for everyone involved in this industry.

I would also like to recognize the skill and courage of the female livestock extension workers and the female village milk collectors, who came forward to serve as examples and inspire other women to engage in business and usher in a better life for their families.

I would like to thank the government agencies and institutions in Punjab and Sindh, Islamia University of Bahawalpur, and Livestock and Dairy Development Department Bahawalpur for their support, especially in the certification of the Female Livestock Extension Workers.

I offer our gratitude to H.E. Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf, for the support that he has shown to the many individuals and organizations involved in the dairy sector in Pakistan.

The American People stand by our Pakistani friends to foster economic development and improve the livelihoods of those who need it most. We reaffirm our long-term commitment to a ROSHAN PAKISTAN.

Khuda Hafez.